

CHAPTER 146 INTRODUCTION TO FAR PART 137

1. AGRICULTURAL AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS.

FAR Part 137 is applicable to all persons conducting agricultural aircraft operations within the United States. The conducting of these operations requires an Agricultural Aircraft Operator Certificate. Exceptions include the use of public aircraft and the dispensing of water on forest fires by rotorcraft external-load operators.

3. PUBLIC EMERGENCIES. FAR § 137.1(b) allows certificated agricultural operators to deviate from FAR Part 137 for relief and welfare activities during public emergencies. The determination of a public emergency is made by an agency of the United States or by a state or local government.

5. DEFINITION OF AGRICULTURAL AIRCRAFT OPERATION. An agricultural aircraft operation involves any of the following functions:

- The dispensing of any economic poison, as defined in FAR § 137.3
- The dispensing of any other substance intended for plant nourishment, soil treatment, plant growth, or pest control
- Any dispersing activities directly affecting agriculture, horticulture, or forest preservation

7. AIRCRAFT EQUIPMENT

A. The applicant must have at least one certificated and airworthy aircraft equipped for agricultural operations.

B. FAR § 137.31 requires each aircraft operated by an agricultural aircraft operator to be equipped with a suitable and properly installed shoulder harness for the use of each pilot. This use of the term “suitable and properly installed” shall be interpreted to mean “of an approved type”.

9. HAZARDOUS/TOXIC MATERIALS. The danger of contamination by toxic agricultural chemicals is very real. Common sense in the presence of agricultural chemicals is very important, and inspectors should be on the alert for exposure to hazardous/toxic materials.

A. *Accident Investigation.* For safety reasons, inspectors should determine what chemicals were being dispensed before reporting to the site of an agricultural aircraft accident. The inspector must determine the chemicals’ specific hazards and the precautions to be taken. In this type of aircraft accident, a large amount of chemical can be concentrated in a small area, increasing the hazards to investigating inspectors.

B. FAA inspectors should become familiar with the Federal and state agencies that work with aerial application of hazardous/toxic materials. Some district offices may also maintain files on this subject. Refer to Vol. II, Ch. 211, “Conduct Accident Investigation”.

